

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EVOLUTION OF BELGIAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE

SUMMARY. RESPONDING TO JULY 11 INFLUENTIAL CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC FLEMISH DAILY "STANDAARD" EDITORIAL CRITICAL OF BELGIAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE, FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE HAS SPELLED OUT BROAD LINES OF A SHIFT FORTHCOMING IN BELGIAN EMPHASIS FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING TO ECONOMIC SECTOR. END SUMMARY

1. STANDAARD'S THEME WAS THAT 15 YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE IT IS NO LONGER REASONABLE TO SEND TEACHERS OF HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND "BAD" FRENCH. RATHER, BELGIUM SHOULD SEND EXPERTS TO IMPROVE ZAIRE'S INFRASTRUCTURE IN AGRICULTURE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNICATIONS. PART OF STANDAARD'S UNSTATED PURPOSE IN VOICING THIS SUGGESTION IS DOUBTLESS TO CREAT JOBS FOR DUTCH LANGUAGE BELGIANS, WHO CANNOT BE SELECTED TO TEACH FRENCH. AS LARGELY FRANCOPHONE TECHNICAL CADRES SENT TO ZAIRE (70 PERCENT TO 80 PERCENT OF TOTAL) ARE ASSURED POSITIONS IN BELGIAN ADMINISTRATION IF FIRED BY ZAIRE, WHEN THEY RETURN, ISSUE HAS COMMUNITY OVERTONES HERE.

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2. VAN ELSLANDE NOTED THAT OF 2,200 BELGIANS SENT ZAIRE UNDER

TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS IN 1975, 57 PERCENT ARE TEACHERS. HE SAID THAT LOOKING TO FUTURE MORE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PUT ON ECONOMIC SECTOR, ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURE. AT PRESENT THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT 250 BELGIANS IN AGRICULTURE AND ABOUT SAME NUMBER IN PUBLIC HEALTH. VAN ELSLANDE AGREED THAT TIME HAS COME TO SHIFT EMPHASIS, SAYING THAT ZAIRE HAS AN INCREASING NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CAPABLE OF TAKING OVER FROM BELGIANS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION. FROM 1962 TO 1974, 1200 ZAIROIS HAVE COMPLETED THEIR STUDIES IN BELGIUM. HE ALSO NOTED HUNDREDS OF GRADUATES PER YEAR FROM ZAIROIS UNIVERSITIES. BELGIANS IN UNIVERSITY LEVEL EDUCATION IN ZAIRE NUMBER 146, WHICH NUMBER WILL REMAIN STADY. IN 1974-1975, THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 700 BELGIANS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION, WHICH WILL DECLINE TO APPROXIMATELY 600 IN 1975-1976.

3. VAN ELSLANDE REPORTED THAT BELGO-ZAIROIS TECHNICAL COMMISSIONS COMPLETED THEIR WORK IN OCTOBER 1974 IN AGREEMENT TO "REDEPLOY PROGRESSIVELY" BELGIAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION FROM SECONDARY, SOCIAL AND COMMERCIAL EDUCATION IN ORDER TO "AFRICANIZE" THESE SECTORS ACCORDING TO THE GOALS OF "HORIZON 80" PROGRAM. EMPHASIS WILL SHIFT TO TECHNICAL AND AGRICULTURAL TRAINING, WHILE UPPER LEVEL TRAINING AND UNIVERSITY LEVEL BELGIAN INSTRUCTORS WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED.

4. COMMENT. BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT ONLY RESPONDING TO INTERNAL BELGIAN COMMUNITY PRESSURES, BUT ALSO SEEKING EFFECTIVE AND NON-CONTENTIOUS WAYS TO CONTINUE ITS ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE. THEREBY BELGIUM HOPES TO MAINTAIN PRESENT MOMENTUM TO BETTERING BELGO-ZAIROIS RELATIONS. FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS TOLD US THAT ONE OF BELGIUM'S PROBLEMS IS TO FIND WAYS TO EXTEND EFFECTIVE AID WITHOUT SUCH AID COSTING BELGIUM LARGE NEW SUMS, AND WHICH MIGHT BE WASTED. FIRESTONE

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